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THE HOUSE OF
LA GRANDE MARQUE, AT COGNAC
AND THE CHARENTE DISTRICT.

(From the Western Times.)

A correspondent writes:—"Having received an invitation from Mr. Victor Jouannet, the managing director of that extensive brandy house at Cognac, which is known in England under the title of La Grande Marque, I availed myself of it in order to inspect their enormous stock, and also that I might obtain some general information respecting the production of brandy in the Charante district. The Charante district, or as we should call it in England, the county of Charente, is one of the most interesting parts of France. This is owing to its production of brandy, the finest and most delicate spirit that can be distilled, and represents one of the most important sources of the general wealth of France. The largest town in the district is Angouleme, but Cognac, although having a population of only about 9,000, is the most important. This town is situated in the neighbourhood of the finest brandy producing vineyards, known as the champagne district of Cognac. The district which surrounds this and produces brandy next in quality and value is called Borderies, and the last, or as I may say the third growth, is produced in the outside district which extends round the towns of Angouleme, Saintes and Mirambeau, and almost to the banks of the river Garonne. This is called the Bois district. The pure Cognac brandy is distilled from wine grown in the three districts, Champagne, Borderies, and Bois, and this the leading houses of Cognac are most anxious to preserve in that native purity which has made Cognac so famous. Any merchant is regarded as acting fraudulently who dares to mix with the brandy of Charente district spurious spirit, or even spirit made from wine grown in any other district. The average crop of the Charente district is about 600 gallons of wine per acre, and the surface cultivated being 250,000 acres yield about 150,000,000 gallons, which, when distilled, represent 15,000,000 gallons as the average annual yield of brandy. It is the general impression in England that the distillation of brandy is performed by the Cognac houses, and that large firms are necessarily holders of large farms; but the brandy merchants are no more producers than our brewers are culivators of hops and barley. No large farms indeed exist in the Charente district. It is stated on good authority that there are not five proprietors who hold 75 acres of vineyard, not ten landowners possessing 40 acres, while holders of 12 acres do not exceed 30 in number. As in England the farmer goes to market with the sample of corn, so in the Charente district the French farmer attends the Cognac market with samples of his brandy, and thus the trade have to make up their stocks by the purchase of an innumerable number of small parcels. The stores of La Grande Marque, which are situated at the south end of the park of the town of Cognac, cover two acres of ground and hold 25,000 hogsheads, which contain about one and a half million gallons of the finest brandy that could be purchased, including the celebrated vintages of 1851, 1845, and 1835. To accumulate this enormous stock, purchases had to be made with some thousands of different farmers, and the value is of such an extent that it is insured with eighteen different Insurance Companies. The quality of the different samples of brandy varies very considerably, so that the superiority of the stock of a Cognac house depends entirely upon great judgment in their selections and the holding sufficient capital to be always able to buy at the right time and direct from the farmers."

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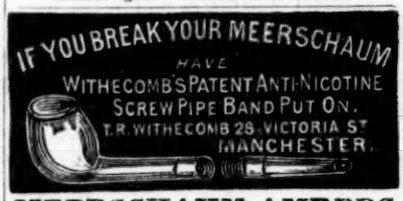

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"Romiley, near Stockport, May 8th, 1864.
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"J. H. STEWART.
"Mr. Pritchard, Manchester."

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BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS.

WE have nowadays to be very circumspect in our discussions upon women's rights, lest even when we are on the side of the ladies we should peradventure wound their self-love by inferential slights. We have to apologize for even assuming the ladies to be at a disadvantage on their own declaration, and for venturing to be their champions; so that really the safer plan would appear to be to let them work out their own salvation in their own way, and not meddle at all in the enterprise. The two prime demands of the ladies now we take to be very reasonable. We must beg pardon for saying that, but we do not very well know how else to put it. It is demanded that women who are not married or who are widows, being householders and paying rates and taxes as independent individuals of the body politic, should have a vote for members of Parliament. It is also demanded that the separate property of married women should be placed upon a fairer footing than it is at present. We fancy that these demands will soon be conceded. We even go further, and assert that the faculties of the ladies might be made more available for the reformation of this wicked world than they are now, and that those ladies who, on the first blush (this is not a designed simile) would appear to be making exaggerated calls upon society for the fuller recognition of their powers, are only using a very necessary exaggeration, considering the sleepiness and supineness of the public upon the question. We know sometimes that when men want some shares in a new company they apply for a hundred in the hope of getting ten. It is so to a great extent with the ladies who are agitating for their rights. At all events, we cannot think that they seriously contemplate the revolution which their extremest arguments would necessarily bring about.

We have recently had the pleasure of perusing a most interesting paper, read by a lady at the Claylands Debating Club of London, and published by Mr. John Heywood, at the request of the club, on the question, *Can the claims advanced on behalf of women by Mr. J. S. Mill be advantageously granted in this country?* The authoress says Yes to this enquiry with great force and vigour, and we should doubt very much if the question were ever debated with equal ability before. The pamphlet is a downright good one, and the spirit and dash of it quite carry the reader away. There is, moreover, no dissipation of power in the matter of diction. The words are well ordered and skilfully marshalled; the thrusts are those of a practised and expert fencer, and are never wild. We have a word to say about this pamphlet, not so much for the purpose of controverting the main principle advocated therein, as of criticizing some of the arguments by which that principle is sought to be established. If we use any weapons that may wear the aspect of sneers or disparagement, we say unaffectedly that they are not so designed. In the lady of the Claylands Debating Society we have evidently a very sensitive dialectician, but the sensitiveness, though eager and alert, is not small or petty. We, *i.e.* the men, "catch it" pretty freely, but there is nothing like scolding or rating in the pamphlet.

Still we cannot help feeling that we occasionally get but scant justice from our heroine. Much of the legislation which she complains of is really only accidentally adverse to women. We cannot believe that men, upon these law-making occasions, ever have had in their minds the stark naked idea that their wives and daughters are really—as the pamphleteeress alleges—a subject race. Much of the obloquy under which the men are now suffering is due to the fact that they have always had in view the protection of women, and the placing them out of the way of the turmoil and disagreeableness of public affairs. If the ladies object to that situation, all well and good; let them then say so, without the imputation of sinister motives, or the suggestion that the alleged protection really means subjection. Perhaps this doctrine of "protection" dates from savage times, but it is not the less natural on that account. Society has been streaked with savagery in many other particulars besides the treatment of women. All we can do is to hope that, as increasing knowledge and refinement have filed off the roughness of humanity all round, the ladies will ultimately get their share of that advantage. Indeed they are getting it now. Our authoress is desirous of artificially expediting this consummation—a perfectly natural desire, only a little unpractical, because we cannot apply the steam-engine to manners and habits and customs.

The *public* disabilities of the ladies, if they may so be termed, are not, as our authoress supposes, true exponents of her *private* social position. The man who would refuse his wife a vote does not indicate by that refusal that he considers her a little idiot, and considerably lower than the angels. He may, on the contrary, desire that his wife should walk with him along their life path with all the fulness of coequal moral development, advising him and strengthening him and warning him, and being, in fact, to him all that the authoress could desire. Whilst, therefore, we go in for enlarging, if you like to call it so, the public function of the female man, we cannot admit that this would of necessity do much for the social elevation or consequence of the sex.

If we could open men and women as we do watches, and take out their minds and put them ticking in a shop window, it is quite likely that without labels the general public would not know which was a male and which a female mind. In their essence they may be the same, but we cannot work the world by essences. The essences have to be cabbed about in concrete carcases, and if the carcase do not originally influence the essence, the vicissitudes through which the former has to pass, and the hard rubs it must encounter, touch up the latter inevitably. This way of looking at the question does not contravene the old theory that mind governs matter. It only means that physical characteristics affect the play and the tendency of the mind. If we were to say that it was instinct which enabled a woman to know the cry of her own baby amongst a thousand, our authoress would resent the use of the word "instinct," and would say that it was the more delicate organization, the finer strung sensibilities of the woman. But a man could not detect the cry at all. Is this because he has a rougher intellect, then? Scarcely. The whole difference is a physical one, and the ladies may argue as glibly as they like, they cannot by mere assertion get over that difficulty.

The question dates from the diverse construction of the sexes. The authoress admits the force of this in the allusions she is compelled to make to the natural retirement of women at certain seasons from active affairs. This gives men an advantage; we are almost disposed to think that the authoress considers it a mean advantage. Nature, however, was the handicapper, and there can in this case be no appeal to Admiral Rous. The arguments of this lady point inferentially to the abolition of child-bearing as a national advantage. At present the married ladies are not only unfairly handicapped vis-à-vis of the *men*, but also vis-à-vis of the *virgins*. The latter can soar into the empyrean, where the finest forms of emancipated woman hold sweet intercourse together, whilst the married ladies are stifling the loftiest aspirations by the muslin of the babies' bassinettes. It is clear from the pamphlet that the "baby" disadvantage is a very prominent one in the mind of the authoress—baby preventing his Ma from soaring—but we feel certain our authoress is too true a woman, too good a mother, too gentle and loving a wife, to wish to purchase a fairer platform for her sex in the world's conflict by abolishing this disadvantage. And as she cannot abolish it, is it not her duty to recognize it as a physical fact which accounts for very much of the apparent injustice of which she complains? There is the law of woman's life hard and fast; it is the key to the whole question; it refuses to be smothered by the most refined sentiment. If it were possible to choke it off by that commodity, our authoress would put it as elegantly to death as the most fastidious poet could desire.

After no finical fashion, but with heart and soul and strength, we go with the ladies in their demands for a further public recognition of their claims than they have at present. But they must not exaggerate them. When we speak of the proper domain of the ladies (we will not irritate the Claylands Society by attempting to define it), we allude to no contracted or inferior department. We have in our mind's eye a domain which the wisest and best of them ought to be proud to govern. Were they to sign their abdication of that government, chaos would come

again, for in that sovereignty is included all the virtue and goodness and greatness of which the most perfect of God's creatures is capable, and where there is even at present—with all respect for our authoress be it said—ample room and verge enough for the display of those great attributes which in her most eloquent essay she has catalogued as the proud prerogative of her sex.

IN THE GALLERY AT THE OPERA.

DEAR SPHINX,—In your notice of the Italian Opera you were pleased to say that "the humblest lover of music who is filled with despair by a quartetto for stringed instruments may derive the keenest pleasure from the music of opera." That sentence sums up pretty correctly my own power of appreciating music. Music I enjoy, but of its technical qualities I know little or nothing, resembling in this, I suspect, a very large proportion of my fellow-countrymen. Bear this in mind, if you please, while you read my present communication.

A certain vagabond disposition, a liking for unrestrained Bohemian freedom, and an insurmountable objection to the payment of large admission fees, impel me instinctively and invariably to take my pleasure in the gallery on opera nights. To reach this aerial locality at the Prince's Theatre is attended with difficulties that might deter any but an enthusiastic devotee of art. A few minutes before seven o'clock, on one of the opera evenings, I found myself in a long cavernous passage which traverses the whole length of the theatre, and which is approached from a street in the rear of it. There is a large number of persons collected here, of a very orderly sort, who are waiting for admission. Jets of light, placed at intervals along the walls, relieve the otherwise gloomy darkness of the passage, but cast a lurid light over the multitude of heads crammed into the narrow space, the owners of which, in their stolid and almost unbroken silence, remind one of Wordsworth's

> Party in a parlour,
> All silent and all damned.

Occasionally this stillness is broken by a subdued growl, to the effect that "they manage these things better in France," or other like querulous or original remark. Admission being gained, the crowd passes through barriers that break the pressure admirably, and, having paid its money under the eye of a policeman, climbs a lofty spiral staircase, on the walls of which are placed notices warning us that we must not, under penalties, indulge in whistling, shouting, or other unseemly noises calculated to disturb the peace of the house. Taking the best seat which presents itself, and which, by the way, is anything but a comfortable one for a protracted sitting, I find I am perched somewhere about on a level with the ordinary ceiling which covers the centre of the house. The view is neither extensive nor imposing. The theatre presents the appearance of a well, over the railed edge of which one peers into the depths below. Of the pit and orchestra nothing can be seen, and the view of the stage is bounded by a line which takes in the prompter's box. The worst features of the place are that it is almost unsufferably hot and draughty. The occupants of the gallery at the opera are usually of a mixed kind, but respectable in the main. To judge from the remarks one hears, and from the attention paid to the performance, I suspect that some of the keenest critics are to be found up here. On the other hand, there are some whose presence it is difficult to account for. Among the latter may be reckoned a few whose utter disregard for the habits of polite society is displayed in their disposition to divest themselves of their upper garments and indulge in the coolness and freedom of shirt sleeves.

During the interval I prepare myself for the feast that is to come by such study of the translated copy of the opera as the dim light will afford. My greatest assistance, however, is derived from my friend Diogenes, who usually accompanies me on these occasions, and whose large knowledge and fine appreciation of operatic music is invaluable. He is one of those choice spirits who combine refined tastes with a keen critical faculty, and whose devotion to art is marked by that noble Bohemianism of which Thackeray was the most perfect type. During these intervals of waiting I have often pleasant discussions with him regarding the æsthetic effects of music. Our views differ widely, he maintaining that the pleasure of music is purely sensuous, I as stoutly holding that the purpose of art is unfulfilled unless it embodies noble ideas, and appeals in this way to the heart and feelings. In vain I quote De Quincey's opinion, who says: "the mistake of most people is to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and, therefore, that they are purely passive as to its effects. This is not so; it is by the action of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed. 'But,' says a friend, 'a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters; I can attach no ideas to them.' Ideas! my dear friend! there is no occasion for them. All that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings." In accordance with my friend's view of the case, I have known him at the opera, when a sight of the stage was not to be obtained without discomfort, lie quietly on his back in a corner, satisfied with being able to listen to the music.

In due time the orchestra takes its place, and the overture begins. The opera is *Il Flauto Magico*, of which you have given a critical estimate the truth of which it is not my purpose to question. Of the instrumental music I do not make much. My friend Diogenes revels in it. There are parts, however, which, responding to some hidden harmony and sympathy within, conjure up thoughts, feelings, and images in the mind difficult to account for or to analyse. There are others, again, which are almost tyrannous in their complexity of sounds, reminding one of a passage in Charles Lamb's "Chapter on Ears," wherein he says, "I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention." I find it most pleasant to listen to the vocal music, and especially the airs, though in making this admission I know that I am but displaying my ignorance. Here De Quincey is against me. In his essay on Style he says, "So little is the grandeur of this divine art suspected among us generally, that a man will write an essay deliberately for the purpose of putting on record his own preference of a song to the most elaborate music of Mozart. Let him who finds the maximum of his musical gratification in a song be assured, by that one fact, that his sensibility is rude and undeveloped." Nevertheless, I note that the majority of audiences seem to be of this kind, and that airs are more rapturously received and more frequently encored than any other kind of musical performance. For my own part I cannot convey to you how impatiently I wait for "La Dove prende" in *Il Flauto Magico*, and "Dove Sono" in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The other night I noticed that the house was hushed to silence to hear Munka sing the "Last Rose of Summer" in *Marta*.

Of the plot and arrangement of Mozart's *Il Flauto* you have said sufficient in the way of extenuation. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking the theme unworthy of the musical composition. "Is it not a pity," say I to Diogenes, as we light our pipes after the performance, "that such divine music should be made the exponent of such trivial and almost absurd circumstances?" "Not at all," he replies; "the music is entirely independent of the words and actions with which it is associated." "But," I urge, "should not this divine art of music be devoted to the embodiment of great ideas and noble circumstances?" "Not necessarily," he says; "these musical sounds and arrangements have a charm for the ear independent of any higher purpose of teaching." "But both Ruskin and Carlyle are against you there," say I, quoting that definition of great art in the *Modern Painters* wherein the writer says:—"That art is greatest which conveys to the mind of the spectator, by any means whatsoever, the greatest number of the greatest ideas." Then I quoted from Carlyle's celebrated paper on the opera, wherein he deplores how far we have fallen as a people in our idea of the correct use of music, and what contemptible works of art our operas usually are, as far as any serious purpose is concerned. "It is well the world is not of Carlyle's way of thinking," replies Diogenes, "or we should all be too solemnly serious in our amusements; nor of Ruskin's, either, who says we are too fond of burlesques in art to become a great people. As for Ruskin's theory of art, I deny it altogether." Whereon we fall into a discussion on the nature and province of art, and are led ere long into subtle metaphysical inquiries regarding things objective and subjective, as cloudy and evanescent in their nature as the smoke that curls from our pipes.—I am, dear *Sphinx*, yours,

A BOHEMIAN.

THE LATEST BYRON MYSTERY.—Toole *v.* Knowles.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A PAPER CHASE

WITH THE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB.

THE Manchester Athletic Football Club, or more properly the Football branch of the Athletic Club, closed their season last Saturday with a cross-country paper chase. The day was one of the warm, bright glimpses of spring that tempt suburban villa-dwellers to a spell of amateur gardening, and ardent cricketers to a stroll to see "how their ground looks." The meet was at the pavilion of the field, devoted to cricket in summer and football in winter. It lies green and quiet under the towers of the Independent College, just where Whalley Range breaks away from suburb into real open country.

A Paper Chase, sometimes called Hare and Hounds, is very simple when resolved into its elements of sport. Two likely runners, with plenty of wind and last, who know the country and its geography well, start off as "hares," each carrying a small bag of paper torn up into inch-square bits. The papers, scattered occasionally here and there, form a trail or scent by which the route of the runners can be tracked. After an interval generally of fifteen or twenty minutes, the rest follow in pursuit as "hounds." The "hares" by doubling, by leaving here and there a false scent, and by various artifices, are allowed to baffle the hounds a little and put them at fault. Simple as all this reads, there is an opening for excitement and sport enough, to those who are in good condition. Last Saturday afternoon proved this. Two likely "hares," of good lungs and limbs and familiar with the neighbouring country, were unslipped, and after twenty minutes' "law," the hounds, fifteen in number, started in pursuit. All were in light running costume, white or grey flannels; many wore the red striped jerseys of the club, some coloured shirts, and all cricketing caps. Their feet were "prepared for every chance." All streamed away diagonally across the field, tore through or climbed the hedge, trotted down a lane a little way, and struck fairly across the country, which, in this part, was "a land made blithe with plough and harrow." But ploughed or harrowed, no wheat grew under anyone's feet that afternoon. The hares had evidently said, like Young Lochinvar, "they'll have fleet legs that follow." So away after them! Now it is over a field with the young wheat just shot above the brown soil, clouding the amber with a brilliant emerald mistiness. Now it is along a hedge-side, every spray of which is thickly bursting into tiny yellow dots. The air gets clearer and more exhilarating; the pack grow livelier, and some take running leaps over the fences and hedges.

As soon as the painful shortness of breath is gone which marks the falling of the "first wind," with the resurrection of the second will come more voice, "go," and spring. Hallo! A small wood on a bank—Hough End Clough—with no "scent" to guide. At fault for the first time. But not for long. Some grinning rustics point out the direction. A wide brook bars the way, with a high bank. Over it, in dashing style, flies an "ingenuous youth" in white, blue-girded, and, landing down on the opposite bank, breasts the rise. Close at his heels is a second. Some by the bridge, some one way, some another, all find their way across—the loud shouts of delight marking the wondering rustics' appreciation of seeing one or two go into the brook—take up the momentarily lost trail, and, like Camilla, "scour the plain." Foremost go three; one, the blue-sashed youth who led off the jump, noted as a brilliant steeple-chaser, football-player, and boxer; a second conspicuous by his big back, with piston-like action of arms and shoulders, and shining head, in his day the champion runner; a third, an adventitious arrival in a striped linen shirt. Many of the others are well up, for are not their names written in the book of the chronicles of the Athletic-cum-Football Club's famous doings and matchless matches? Helter-skelter they all tear away, over and under wire fences, into meadows where the sheep scatter frightened, and over or through hedges. "Yoicks!" shouts one excited throat. "Tally-ho!" responds another. They are all now off to the Workhouse as fast as their legs can carry them. But they do not get there. A great pasture field is scoured in vain for traces of the "scent." At fault. Spread out! Scour the sides! Scour the centre! Scour everywhere! Yoicks! it is found at last, and away all trend past a farm-house, where the maid looks up—cloth in one hand, pitcher in the other—to wonder at the rout, as they bear down a lane a little to the right of the paupers' palace. Some have to put on the steam to make up lost ground, for they were at the other corner when the trail was found. Then over a ditch, up a bank, and through a hedge, and "in they burst and on they rush" through the fields once more, "while like a guiding star amid the foremost front ones shone the bald pate of Navarre!" The pace keeps steady, but already some are tailing off, so that the chase takes the appearance of a variegated and shifting comet describing an orbit round the country, with—like comets—no apparent object beyond perplexing the country people, who all come out of their houses to look. And they do look. Perhaps they take them for the whole lunatic asylum ward broken loose from the Workhouse in their underclothing; perhaps——but they do not stop to think what they may be taken for. Again, too, they might be taken up by some infuriated farmer for trespassing, although the improbability of doing any harm at this time of the year makes against such a supposition, granting there were a pause in their fleet career to make it.

Thought? There is no such thing as thought now. There is only one wild forward impetus, and let the hindmost take care of himself. An odorous waft as of a very uncommon sewer strikes every one's nasal sensations; a mixed, indescribable odour, as of slime and sewage stewing in the sun. With feelings very different to those of Xenophon's army at sight of the sea, the cry goes up "the river! the river!" It was the Mersey. Along the footway on the top of the bank defiles the chase in Indian file, right on, until the bridge near Northenden is reached. There a halt is cried. At fault again. Up and down the road, everywhere, the baffled "hounds" prowl about for some minutes, while "traps" and carriages stay to gaze. Hi! over the fence to the right, one only attempting to clear it. He takes a good spring, but, miscalculating the distance, strikes the top wire and comes with his shoulder to the ground. But not a second's delay. With the instinct most gymnasts learn by painful experience, he, like a spider, has in the air gathered arms, legs, and all together, and bounds up to his feet, uninjured except in his feelings. The "scent" now becomes scarce. The hares are evidently breathing themselves and taking it gently. Labourers, however, some rolling the harrowed fields, some taking a survey of nature, occasionally are met with to give information. The tail of the comet lengthens and grows batchy. The brown wheat lands show foot marks, and afford easy tracking, but over meadows one is soon at fault. The pack are now steadily settled down to work. There has been little "bugleing"—breath and wind are too precious. At last a long meadow with no trace whatever. An insane and spectacled velocipedist on a distant road, with shouts of encouragement attracts some to him, but he has seen nothing of the "hares." Blow him. A venture is made down a road to the left, a little way into a small village, but no news, no trace. All the women turn out in their short check bedgowns, cloth or brush in hand. The children put one hand in their mouth, and with the other clutch a fold of their mother's skirt, and look round half shyly half slily. This is irritating. The leaders fret and fume. All hark back. One or two give a desperate leap over a hedge, and look through a small wood. In vain. At last, after a tedious delay, a rider on horseback gives the information that the hares went off Tatton way. Down the road all go as far as a park gate. In they turn. Past Wythenshawe Hall, where the stable men and the white-capped light print-dressed maids turn out as they pass—on through the park, still on. The last long stoppage has brought everybody together again. The hunt has picked up several enthusiastic and adventurous additions on the way. The scent is still difficult to follow, baffling and laborious to find, but there is no long stoppage now. A road, and soon after a railway, are crossed, and the course is much as it has been. There is but little thought of scenery—more being directed to the legs and "bellows," for some are by this time, like the day, far spent. The same three have kept well in front, the blue-belted and shoulder-working ones having especially distinguished themselves by an ubiquitous activity whenever the pack was "at fault." The afternoon sets into a glorious piece of "weather-wisdom," to which the wind, coolly rising, adds a welcome freshness.

The hunt at last rounds by Timperley and Baguley, and makes northwards for home. The "hares" are still far a-head. Plenty of real ones start up almost from under foot, to scud and scurry off to their "forms," perhaps in the little wood just left behind. Orchards—"dry bones" at present, but before long to be clothed with an opaline cloud, turning forth a silver lining flushed with pink on the day—are passed.

Meadows are crossed where crocuses, lilac, and lavender with yellow hearts are hiding wild among the grey grass. Market gardens, strawberry beds, cabbage plots—to the wonder, sometimes rage, of the owner—are shot through. It has been no use for farmers setting up fences or hedges, no use having copses or woods, over, under, or through them a way has been taken, and now that the hares have struck a bee-line for home, all obstacles are derided. Sale is left on the left, Jackson's Boat is crossed, the last effort is made, and Whalley Range reached. They look, many of them, as if they had been running for death. Owing to the long faults, the hares have been home some time, and the arrivals are not so straggling as they might have been. Conspicuous amongst the first batch are the blue-sashed youth already mentioned—by the way, an old Rugbeian, and *au fait* at "chases"—and one of the club's "milers." The strong-looking runner with the "action" of the shoulders is well up. Notes are compared, the distance covered reckoned to be about fifteen miles, the 'bus receives them, and they depart.

The pace and the scent might have been better, although the ground, dry and springy, and the day, could not have been so. The course taken, lying as it did through the north of the Vale Royal, was varied and picturesque, allowing of all kinds of running and jumping, although there might have been more of the latter. Considering the condition of the runners, the performance was very fair. It is to be hoped that this is not the last of these grand and enjoyable bursts across country. Assuredly it will not soon be forgotten.

MR. CHARLES DILLON.

EXACTLY eighteen years since, Mr. Charles Dillon performed the part of Belphegor at the last Dramatic Festival in Manchester on behalf of the local charities. He declined on that occasion to receive from Mr. Knowles a single farthing, even towards paying his own and his wife's travelling expenses, a fact new probably to young playgoers, but which the Sphinx, which is as old as the Pyramids, has not forgotten. His reappearance at the Prince's Theatre this week during the present festival, although from unavoidable circumstances not on the same stage, nor in the same cause, is pleasantly and singularly appropriate.

Mr. Dillon is as much identified with the part of Belphegor, the mountebank, as Mr. Charles Kean was with Louis the Eleventh, and Mr. Phelps is with Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, Mr. Sothern with that other mountebank Dundreary, Mr. Toole with Caleb Plummer, and Miss Kate Bateman with Leah, the ill-used and persecuted Jewess. The incidents and vicissitudes of a clown's life have been made the basis of many a pathetic story, and episodes, real or imaginary, in the private lives of actors and actresses have long been favourite subjects for the exercise of the dramatist's craft. Nell Gwynne, David Garrick, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Peg Woffington, have all been utilized in this way. People take a curious pleasure in obtaining glimpses of the private lives of public performers, and discovering that they have thoughts, affections, feelings, and passions like themselves. Some time since we remember seeing Mr. and Mrs. Keeley perform in a farce, in which they represented *themselves*, and pleased the audience vastly by calling each other Bob and Mary Anne, and illustrating other pleasing pleasantries, just as the pit and galleries of Drury Lane Theatre roared with delight, when Queen Adelaide in the Royal box made a cup of tea for his late most gracious Majesty King William IV, and handed it to that bluff and hearty Sovereign. Belphegor, the strolling and noble-minded mountebank, who simply says that "travelling is the source of his gaiety," is a character which appeals at once to the sympathies of an audience, and Mr. Dillon portrays the different shades and phases of the part, the humour, pathos, manliness, wretchedness, and fortitude, with much discrimination and intensity. In fact the part exactly suits him, and a certain mannerism of style which is peculiar to him adds to its effect. Mr. Dillon belongs to the turbulent school of acting, a style of which Edmund Kean, who himself was a strolling player, was probably the modern originator. Kean has had his followers, some genuine and some spurious, just as the Kembles had theirs. Mr. Dillon can play other parts besides Belphegor with power and effect, but there is a certain "strolling" staginess about his acting, which, while it detracts from the merits of his Lear and Macbeth, is quite in character with Belphegor, the itinerant acrobat. His best scenes are those in which he learns his wife's departure, his agony when he conceives himself forsaken, his revealing himself to the infamous Lavarennes, and his subsequent impersonation of the Chevalier. These scenes he illustrated with his usual power and vigour, and he was loudly applauded. Pocket handkerchiefs, also, were in considerable request.

When this drama was first adapted to the English stage, the principal part was played by Mr. B. Webster at the Adelphi. Mr. Dillon shortly afterwards produced his version, which was immediately recognized and acknowledged as *the* exponent of the character. Since then he has made a six years' tour of the globe, and has played the part on almost every stage where the English language is spoken. During his travels he nearly suffered shipwreck in the Pacific ocean, and worked at the pumps for weeks with the energy which characterizes him. We have said above that Belphegor appeals directly to the sympathies of the audience, which is a vast element of success in a drama. A British audience is sentimental, and likes to have its feelings harrowed occasionally. It is a cheap and easy luxury of woe. Whether it is a very healthy indulgence is another matter, and is open to doubt. A distinguished moral philosopher, descanting upon this topic, has said emphatically that "sympathetic emotions without corresponding action are likely to produce a cold and useless sentimentalism, and that imaginary scenes of sorrow will produce in the inexperienced an intensity of emotion not felt by those whose lives have been devoted to deeds of mercy." However, "because Malvolio has turned virtuous, shall there be no more cakes and ale?" So we shall eschew metaphysics, merely remarking that we have frequently seen the frailest portion of an audience the most moved by scenes of sorrow depicted on the stage. Mr. Dillon's Belphegor is a natural and powerful performance, and affords much satisfaction to the audience, which is never weary of sympathising with his troubles, just as they invariably weep over Miss Bateman's Leah, or that terrible personage, the Stranger, whom we should be glad to see have recourse to Lord Penzance and free us of his miseries for ever.

It affords us pleasure to be able to speak of the performance generally in terms of approbation. For a first night things went very smoothly. We were glad to see none of the painful blundering which occurred at the commencement of Mr. Barry Sullivan's engagement. The scenery, as usual at the Prince's, was good, and the dresses mostly in excellent taste. The chateau and the grounds surrounding it were superb. Miss Fanny Brough as Madeline pleased us. This young actress has almost everything to learn in the way of stage business. "Vaulting ambition o'erleaps itself," and if Miss Brough is judicious, she will not despise the day of small parts, but "will turn aside from the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." With perseverance, we do not doubt that she will perpetuate that dramatic talent which, in the person of her grand-uncle, W. Brough, was conspicuous on the Manchester stage fifty years ago. Little Miss T. Groves acted admirably as the boy Henri, and reminded us of the juvenile efforts of Miss Marie Wilton, Miss Kate Terry, and Miss Bateman. Miss Claude has genuine ability, but should learn to curb a redundancy of manner and exuberance of spirits which degenerate into vulgarity. Mr. Wainwright, who plays many parts most admirably, was quite out of his element as Lavarennes, and reminded us very strongly of Inspector Shandley of the force."

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE GYMNASTIC COMPETITIONS AT THE ATHENÆUM.

THE Athenæum has become the home of so many energetic societies and recreations that one can hardly keep pace with its doings. Several evenings last week were devoted to the annual competitions of its Athletic Club. On the first, Woolley bore off the bell for heavy-weight gymnastics, and Henry was an easy winner when the light-weights came to try conclusions. Henry is quite an original genius in gymnastics of the shoot and swing school, with more grace and style than modern light-weights generally possess. On Tuesday, the medal for clubs and dumb-bells was won by A. Smalley, who seems treading quietly in his famous brother's footsteps, and Todd walked over for the jumping. On Wednesday a very large audience as usual assembled to see the boxing, which seems by far the most popular branch of the whole

range of athletics. Woolley won the heavy-weights in good style, his clean hitting and forward form doing credit to Clare, the club teacher. No fewer than four couples entered for the light-weights, of whom Henry proved ultimately the best by his superior nerve and adroitness. Briggs and Aynell, with practice and coaching, ought to make boxers in time. Much amusement was caused by B. Heap's whimsical but crushing style. What there is to cause rapturous applause among two hundred individuals when one youth plants a telling blow on another's nose or "wind," is hard to discover, unless it arises from the thankfulness that it was not their own nose that caught it. Lowe won the fencing and Lees the singlestick, the latter, after a tie with Todd, whose too eager attack laid him open to smart retaliation. On Friday the carnival concluded by Woolley winning the general proficiency medal from Moores in good style. Sergt. Lee, late instructor in the 72nd Highlanders, the club's permanent retainer and instructor, is so good and scientific a fencer, stick-player, and gymnast, that he may confidently be trusted to keep up the position of the club by the success of his pupils. He can teach well what he knows well, a knack very few ever attain.

NARROW ESCAPE OF A NEWSBOY.

The writer of this paragraph has only just avoided making his first criminal appearance before Mr. Headlam. He very nearly inflicted on an energetic youth of the newsvending persuasion a frightful injury. But he feels sure that any jury would have justified him in the outrage. Authors are proverbially sensitive. Imagine, then, the feelings of a confirmed contributor to these columns on being run against by an excited little boy, with a bundle of papers, violently vociferating, "*Spinx* or *Pleece News—Spinx* or *Pleece News!*" The sensitive author was only deterred from taking a violent revenge upon the offender by the reflection that, were he to do so, he might figure as the centre illustration of the next week's issue of the last-named amiable paper, in the act of brutally assaulting an emaciated little boy—the blood spurting in all directions. This terrible reflection saved that little boy. But let that little boy take care.

NEWSPAPER DISHONESTY.

"RESIGNATION OF MR. BRIGHT" was the leading line of the contents-bill of a recent issue of the *Courier*. Mr. Bright had not resigned. The *Courier* knew that he had not resigned. The *Courier* inside did not even say he had resigned. It contained a little paragraph in an obscure position about the state of Mr. Bright's health, but of resignation not a word. Thousands of persons must have had their steps arrested, and hundreds must have been induced to spend a penny, by this announcement of the contents-bill; yet next morning the *Courier* appeared serenely unconscious of the wrong it had done on the preceding day. In the composition of catch lines for newspaper placards a great deal of petty immorality is practised even by the most respectable journals. In this connection it may be remarked that papers which, when everyone was talking about a late Manchester scandal, piously refused to insert a single line concerning it, now that everyone has quite dismissed it as a thing of the past, make catchpenny capital out of the announcement in large letters on their bills of an extended account of a purely technical and insignificant legal formula that has been gone through with regard to it. One would fain hope that the *Courier's* sensational and false announcement was the result of some unaccountable accident,—in which case it ought to have been explained next day,—but there is a good deal of intentional dishonesty perpetated by journalists in this way, which is rapidly bringing the press into a not undeserved discredit.

"FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME."

Of the performers who took part in the last dramatic festival in 1852' Mr. James Browne, Mrs. Horsman, Mr. John Wood, Mr. Harker, and Miss Vandenhoff are dead; some have achieved fame in London and elsewhere, others we have lost sight of altogether. Those who took part in the previous performances and are now playing on the Manchester stage, are Mr. Charles Dillon, the veteran Mr. P. Rae, who impersonated Old Dornton in *The Road to Ruin* in 1852, Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Egan, and the evergreen Mrs. Bickerstaff, who alone has participated in both festivals.

PULPIT AND PEW.

II.

HAS it ever struck you what a singular thing it is that bodies of people should twice a week assemble together, and let a man get up in a wooden box and lecture them for half an hour upon their moral characters? In what other sphere of life would it be tolerated? Fancy a congregation of grocers twice a week assembling, for the purpose of being taken to task by a grocer mounted in a rostrum for adulterating tea and sugar. Imagine regular assemblages of small publicans, convened to listen to periodical diatribes on salting beer. Really, it is a remarkable habit which induces people to set a man up in a wooden box, making him think that he is wiser than other people, and letting him preach at them, domineer over them, and generally inflict himself upon them. So much meddlesomeness in other people's business would not be suffered in any other matter than religion. It cannot be denied that various laymen—to wit, gentlemen of the Jewish persuasion with a partiality for old clothes, individuals of the rag and bone fraternity, persons with a natural aptitude for the acquirement of the property of other people, quack doctors, and ladies interested in the dissemination of seven-and-sixpenny bottles of hair-dye—do intrude themselves upon one's privacy by means of unpleasant noises, personal calls, and circulars inserted underneath the door; but they don't invade one's domicile and take forcible possession of one's hearth with the smug assurance of a strong-minded female armed with a budget of tracts, or the authoritative confidence of a white-tied and long-coated individual going a parochial round. Nor does one feel compelled to show them into the best room, or to ask them to stop tea; nor does one's daughter work them slippers. Why should one feel as if these other gentry had a claim upon one's time and money? Why should one be liable to be pounced down upon and required to teach in a Sunday school, or to insert oneself into the households of some starving wretches, in back streets, and give them a namby-pamby, goody-goody, barren, ridiculous tract? If, of their own motion, people choose to do these things—in the case of Sunday schools, perhaps well and good; in the case of tracts, undoubtedly ill and bad: but to give a man a sort of right to demand this service at your hands, is surely a most singular proceeding.

Yet the power given to the gentlemen of the wooden box is greater even than this. They not only have a right, but it is considered part of their duty, to take possession of your house and you at some of the most momentous junctures of your life—times, of all others, when one would think a rational person would wish to be alone. Even when you are upon your deathbed, you are not allowed to die by yourself, but you must permit yourself to be assisted by a gentleman who comes in his wooden box specially for the occasion. Really, one would think a man might be allowed to die his own way. But we dare say, there are people to whom, even at the last gasp, the presence of a clergyman is a consolation. There are a great many folks in the world who have no idea how to do anything for themselves; and as they have been accustomed to be helped through their life, they may prefer to be helped out of it. Yet that does not affect the principle of the thing. Is it right that one man should be put in such a position of authority over another man? We are not so sure, if the question came to be examined, whether it would not turn out that this system of putting a man up in a wooden box is a rotten one.

But it never does get examined. Even to propound it

is to incur being stigmatized by some as irreligious—atheistic—and with several other adjectival epithets of which they do not clearly comprehend the meaning. And in the present state of society it is hopeless to expect any mitigation of the despotism of the wooden box: for its warmest advocates—and at the same time, its most abject slaves—are the women: and when the women are on one side, to a woman, it is vain to look for success upon the other. The influence of the inhabitants of white ties and long coats upon the women is a phenomenon—explicable, however, on the theory that women like being preached to: that is, upon abstruse subjects; not upon the subject of the sum total of the milliner's last bill, or latchkeys, or, in short, any subject included in the course of the late Mrs. Caudle; in which cases they prefer to be the preachers. Admit the principle that women like being preached to, and you have the secret of the influence of the cloth upon them at once and entirely divulged. For the parson is essentially a preacher. He is radically a man in a wooden box. It is a complete mistake to suppose he only gets up in the pulpit two or three times in the week. He is always in it. He never gets out of it. He carries it everywhere with him. He walks about in his wooden wine-glass as upon a pair of stilts. To cite what either is a quotation or ought to be—

> Whene'er you like, whate'er you will,
> A parson is a parson still.

Other men, when they leave the shop, throw off the shop. The parson never does. He is always preaching. And very much annoyed he is, if his preaching upon "worldly" themes is not attended to.

In that word "worldly" lies another of the parson's failings. (Here, by parenthesis, let us remark, we use the appellation "parson" in no sneering sense, but as the most appropriate and handy designation for the man in the wooden box.) Upon what he terms "worldliness" the parson is a good deal in the wrong. It appears to be one of the chief functions of his kind to endeavour to convince men that this-worldliness is not so much their concern as "the-other-worldliness." Now, although theoretically men assent to this, in practice they utterly and universally deny it: and we venture to believe that their practice is better than their theory. We heartily agree with the men in the wooden boxes that "other-worldliness" is infinitely more men's concern than men make it, but we as heartily deny that it is as much men's concern as this-worldliness. The affairs of to-morrow—though they may be more important—are not so much our business as the affairs of to-day. Altogether, we think that this world is treated very badly by the parsons. And even out of selfishness, apathy, immorality, and sin, may be derived considerable consolation, in that they counteract the extreme "other-worldliness" and superstition which would be the result of the parsons having things all their own way. Indeed, the contemplation of the sin that is in the world would be appalling, were it not for this solacing consideration. The unhappiness, or rather lack of happiness, that would ensue upon a universal over-righteousness—a piety gone putrid—would be a far more miserable state of things than the present. The pain suffered might be less, but the pleasure enjoyed would be out of all proportion less still. And surely pleasure alloyed by pain is better than next to no pleasure at all. The one thing is life, the other vegetation. Thus, we can conceive no lower or more wretched order of existence than the popular idea of heaven—a white-winged congregation perpetually singing Dr. Watts's hymns. So that in one sense it is really cheerful to think how wicked the world is.

Upon the whole, we feel sceptical whether a man has a right to get up in a wooden box and domineer over other men, even from the best of motives. And now that the system is universally allowed, we do not think the occupants of the position make the right use of the vantage. More false views of life than true ones are promulgated from the pulpit, and the men who stand in it do not exhort the world to do the right thing. Translated out of generalities, the sum of clerical exhortation amounts to about this:—Visit the poor. However catholic may be their generalities, tackle them, and "visit the poor" is what they really mean. Do nothing of the sort. The only result would be that the poor would be very badly visited, yourself much inconvenienced, and your real duties neglected. People need not go out of their way to do good: that is a waste of time and convenience: there is plenty of good to be done *in* their way. And what the men ought, from those wooden boxes, to exhort people to do, is—their whole duty in their hourly path of life. The town-councillor who spends time in sanitary legislation, and the employer of labour who spends money in adequately remunerating his workmen, do, for instance, far more good than if they spent the same amount of time and money in "visiting the poor." What the clergy ought to teach is, minding one's own business—minding it thoroughly and in a generous spirit: what they do teach is, minding other people's business—meddling—visiting the poor: and when they ask for bread, giving them a tract.

NOTES ON 'CHANGE.

MILDEW.

THAT "ill weeds grow apace" is as true a proverb as it is old; but what do you think of a weed taking root and becoming quite a respectable shrub? Growing up, in fact, like the original grain of mustard seed, from very small beginnings, till it gains large and important proportions, and feels that it has just as good a right to spread out its branches as any other tree of the forest. Such a weed flourishes in the midst of us. Its name is Mildew.

Some four or five years ago Mildew was regarded as a very vulgar weed indeed. All conscientious people denounced it, and the Chamber of Commerce went so far as to say that it "not only imperilled the property, but also the honour and integrity of our community." How could such a weed ever become respectable? But it has done so; and this is about the "size" of it.

For some time past the only public attention attracted to this interesting plant was through the medium of occasional letters in the daily papers; such letters serving chiefly to show that the writers had not made themselves acquainted with the contents of previous communications on the same subject. Of late, however, the invective against mildew appears gradually to have assumed a milder form, and for a long while we have heard very little about it. Merchants, who used to frighten agents and manufacturers with horrid threats about "claims," now only allude to the subject with a meaning smile, and the matter is laughed off, as is one of the many funny little fat jokes made on 'Change every morning. Buyers never now even ask the foolish old question, "Will this cloth mildew?"—a question, by the way, which always appeared to us about as useful as asking a horse-dealer, "Is this horse broken-winded?" Nay, we don't think it would now interfere with the purchase if the seller were to observe casually, during the progress of the transaction, "This cloth *will* mildew."

Why is this? Has mildew ceased its destructive vocation? We do not think so. It has simply become respectable. In Manchester many vulgar people become, after a time, very respectable, if they are only properly "taken up," and we don't see why a common little weed like mildew should not at length become a very respectable plant indeed, and vie eventually even with the respectability of the "raw material" itself.

With the exception of the great trial of Mody *v.* Gregson, on which occasion a lot of London folk had opportunity of exhibiting their glorious ignorance of the whole subject, we have had the discussion of the matter pretty much to ourselves in Manchester: but now no longer.

We have before us a pamphlet, issued by the Association for the Protection of Commercial Interests as respects wrecked or damaged property, written by the secretary of that august body, and entitled *Mildew in Grey Shirtings*. After informing us that "the main industry of Manchester is the manufacture of shirtings," and, "that mildew, and the new sizing and dressing introduced after the American war, seem very closely connected," the secretary proceeds to explain what mildew is, and who has "done it." We are, in fact, presented with a reiteration of all the arguments and suggestions right, wrong, probable, impossible, and ridiculous, with which we have all been bored for years. Further, the information has not the merit of being even the result of personal observation, but possesses the stamp of second-handness on every page. Not that we wish to denounce the arguments of the pamphlet. They may be true as gospel, and exhaustive as an air-pump, but the part which interests us most deeply is the conclusion; and oh! what a conclusion it is to rush at. After giving us a list of the stock arguments of the case, our author says—

"The grey shirtings of ten years ago, made of cotton alone, except some trifling dressing necessary to the process of manufacture, cannot be had cheap. Although there may be variations in the price of the goods that are cotton and nothing else, depending on the variation in quality of the cotton, and the market, yet the difference in price between cheap grey shirtings having something besides cotton in them, and shirtings that are all cotton, is too great to leave it possible to suppose that anyone, certainly any merchant, can imagine he is buying cotton and nothing else when he is buying cheap grey shirtings. He must be presumed to know that he is buying shirtings made partly of cotton and partly of some other less expensive material."

We are then told "that grey shirtings were originally all cotton, now they are something else."

"All the world knows," says the Secretary, "the grey shirting world at least may be fairly presumed to know, that it suits the large class of buyers in India and China to get the inferior cheap shirtings. The demand is a deliberate one, and, it must be presumed, made with full knowledge. The merchant orders of the manufacturers a supply suited to this demand. The demand is open to criticism as foolish. But the presumption ought to be that the demand is made with knowledge."

After thus establishing the fact, that when a buyer buys a lot of mildewing shirtings, the price and all other circumstances of the case leave him in no sort of doubt as to their real nature, our author proceeds to enquire "who is to be liable for mildew in grey shirtings?" He thus answers the question:—"Nineteen times out of twenty, it is practically a question between the manufacturer and the merchant. . . . When the contract is for cheap grey shirtings, ninety-nine times out of a hundred the merchant will have to bear the loss, *for he will be taken to have contemplated the risk of mildew*."

Though the Secretary admits "that exporter and importer can only be finally relieved of such difficulties (claims for damage) by eradication of mildew," yet still the moral of the story, if there be such a thing as a moral about it, is this: that the production and exportation of goods, which will in all probability, by reason of their intrinsic worthlessness, sooner or later become rotten, is now a distinct branch of our commerce; and that all an intelligent merchant can be called upon to do, when purchasing this article, is that caution common to the buyers of the Glenfield Patent Starch, namely, "to see that he gets it."

Here, then, is a most valuable addition to what we may term the botanical future of honest industry. Not only may our merchants and manufacturers hope in old age to repose under the shade of their vine and fig tree—the mildew tree may also spread its most respectable branches over them. Let us hope that the claims of conscience may not prove as troublesome as other "claims" of earlier years.

[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

HENRY CORT.

[THE CREATOR OF THE BRITISH IRON TRADE.]

THE county which has been so long the chief seat of the cotton manufacture, and which was the cradle of the canal system of the United Kingdom, can also boast of having produced one of the greatest among the inventors through whose labours the British iron trade has attained its present enormous magnitude and importance. Henry Cort, too, was a Lancashire man, though his native county was never the scene of the operations which have made his name conspicuous in the history of the iron trade. It might be convenient to believe that he inherited with his Lancashire blood the industrial ingenuity and energy which, exerted for centuries, have made his and our county what it is, and that to his early years having been spent in a part of England then and long before noted for its manufacturing industry is to be ascribed his subsequent career as an inventor. Unfortunately, however, little is known of Henry Cort beyond his inventions and calamities, the vast utility of the former, and the sorrowful severity of the latter, stamping him as the Crompton of the iron trade.

Concerning Cort's connection with his native county, nothing more has been discovered than that he was born, in 1740, at Lancaster, and that there his father carried on the trade of a builder and brick-maker. The antecedents of his family, how long they had been settled in Lancaster, what were the up-bringing, education, and the early character and pursuits of Henry Cort, are altogether unknown. His biography jumps at one bound from the meagre record of the date and place of his birth and of his father's trade, to his twenty-fifth year, when he is found in Surrey Street, of the great metropolis, carrying on the business of a navy agent, in all probability, one conducted then very much as it is at present. Cort is understood to have been successful as a navy agent, and in 1768 he married Elizabeth Heysham, "the daughter of a solicitor in Staffordshire, and steward of the Duke of Portland." During the first twenty years of their marriage, she bore him no fewer than thirteen children, three of whom survived almost to our own day, having inherited little more than their father's name, and the memory of his wrongs and calamities, while colossal fortunes were being accumulated out of the results of his skill and industry. Very possibly, the pressure of a rapidly increasing family led Henry Cort to think of some extraneous means of adding to his income as a navy agent, and the state of the British iron manufacture was then such as to appear to promise ample rewards to the ingenuity which could improve certain of its principal processes. In the decade between 1770 and 1780 the iron trade of Great Britain had begun to recover from the depression to which it sank in the middle of the eighteenth century. This recovery was mainly due to the success which had at last attended the endeavour to smelt iron ore by coal, or coke, instead of by wood, or charcoal. In these days we speak of the two great sources of our industrial prosperity, "coal and iron," as indissolubly connected, but theirs was a long and fitful courtship, an engagement frequently broken off, and apparently destined to come to nothing, before they were joined at last in the bonds of permanent and productive wedlock. In the earlier period of the British iron manufacture, wood alone was employed to reduce and smelt the ore, and thus leafy and richly-wooded Sussex, from the amount of potential fuel which it offered in proximity to beds of iron, became in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries one of the chief seats of the English iron trade. It was early in the seventeenth century, and long before the removal of the general prejudice against the use of coal for domestic purposes, that ingenious men seem to have begun the attempt to smelt iron with coal instead of wood. The first success attained was that of the well-known Dud Dudley, one of the illegitimate children of the Lord Dudley of that day, and who was born in 1599. Lord Dudley was the owner of iron-works, and all about Dudley Castle there were iron-workers, whose business had begun to languish through the scarcity of fuel, produced by the voracious appetite of the furnaces for wood. There was an abundance, however, of coal in the neighbourhood, and Dud Dudley, when quite a young man, set about attempting to make the mineral useful to the metal. For more than forty years he prosecuted his operations, through all sorts of interesting vicissitudes, compromised by his loyalty during the great civil war, and after the Restoration threatened and persecuted by the charcoal iron-masters and their workmen, whose processes he threatened to revolutionize. He seems to have succeeded in turning out a marketable pig iron with the aid of coal, but the quality at the best was indifferent, and the make was small. More powerful blowing furnaces than were known in his long day were needed, and the sulphur of the coal, brought in its crude state into contact with the metal, proved injurious to the iron. There was nothing for it but the old process of smelting by charcoal, and as the demand for iron increased with the growth of industry and population, the supply of timber for fuel diminished with the destruction of our Sylva. The produce of English iron continued steadily to decline.

In 1720–30 there were found only ten furnaces in blast in the whole Forest of Dean, when the iron smelters were satisfied with working up merely the cinders left by the Romans. A writer of the time states that we then bought between two and three hundred thousand pounds worth of foreign iron yearly, and that England was the best customer in Europe for Swedish and Russian Iron. By the middle of the eighteenth century the home manufacture had so much fallen off, that the total production of Great Britain is supposed to have amounted to not more than 18,000 tons a year; four-fifths of the iron used in the country being imported from Sweden.

It seems to have been about 1757 that pit-coal was first used successfully and on a large scale for smelting iron, at the famous iron-works of Coalbrooke-dale, in Shropshire, among the spurs of the Wrekin. Abraham Darby, the Quaker, originally from the neighbourhood of Dudley, had settled in Coalbrooke-dale in 1709, and as the oak and hazel woods of the beautiful valley were devoured by their furnaces, he and his successors thought and worked out the problem of smelting iron with coal and coke. By 1760, probably, the operation was practised largely, and in that year, through the exertions of Dr. Roebuck (John Arthur's grandsire), the Carron iron-works was established, and the improved machinery applied in them for blowing furnaces gave a great stimulus to the manufacture of iron by coal. Eight years later, James Watt went over from Glasgow to Kinneil, and told his friend and coadjutor, Dr. Roebuck, the happy news that their steam-engine was at last successful. In the following year, 1769, a memorable one in many ways, the specification of James Watt's steam-engine was lodged, and Richard Arkwright took out a patent for his spinning-machine. With the steam-engine there came in turn new and vastly more powerful machinery for blowing the iron furnaces, and the British iron trade took the start which it has never lost. Meanwhile, in 1765, with a sort of presentiment of what was coming, Mr. Anthony Bacon had leased, at what now seems an incredibly small rental—£200 a year, the forty square miles of country surrounding the then insignificant hamlet of Merthyr Tydvil. Seventeen years later he retired with a large fortune from the iron-works which he had erected, and sublet his realm of coal and iron to four men of enterprise. One of them was Richard Crawshay, of famous industrial memory—he who became a millionaire, and was known as "the iron king," thanks chiefly, perhaps, to poor Henry Cort.

In 1782, "the Cyfartha flitch of the great Bacon domain," as it has been called, came into the hands of this Mr. Richard Crawshay, the son of a small Yorkshire farmer, and who had begun life as errand-boy in an ironmonger's shop at the east end of London. In 1783, Henry Cort took out his first patent. Its object was to secure him the benefit of a discovery for the conversion of pig or cast iron into what is variously termed wrought, malleable, and bar iron. This conversion was at the time when Cort took out his first patent one of the weakest points in the iron manufacture of Great Britain. Charcoal "refineries" had still to be employed, and the hammer was the chief machine used in effecting the conversion. In 1787, Richard Crowshay himself could with difficulty turn out ten tons of bar iron weekly; in 1812, through the application of Cort's inventions, his production of it was at the rate of ten thousand tons a year. While the manufacture of pig and cast iron was progressing rapidly in Great Britain, for malleable iron we seem to have been almost entirely dependent on the foreigner and his furnaces fed by charcoal. At one time, war time too, the Russian government threatened to raise the price of its bar iron to an exorbitant height, believing even that in this department of production we were completely at its mercy.

Possibly it was as a navy-agent that Cort had his attention first drawn to the demand for malleable iron—to the insufficiency of its domestic supply, and to our dependence on the foreigner for a manufactured article the raw material of which abounded in Great Britain. In 1775, moreover, began the American War of Independence, speedily followed by one between England and France, and supplies of iron for naval purposes would more than ever be wanted. However this may be, it is pretty certain that Cort's peculiar business brought him into contact and connection with one Adam Jellicoe, "chief clerk in the pay branch of the Treasurer of the Navy," the author, direct and indirect, of all his woes. To Jellicoe Cort seems to have confided his iron secret, and by Jellicoe its value was appreciated, all the more that his own official position, in those days of general official jobbery and corruption, could enable him to turn it to account. An agreement was concluded between Cort and Jellicoe by which the latter was to advance £27,000, on a security of the assignment of the patent; Jellicoe to receive one half of the profits, and his son Samuel, a clerk in the Navy Pay-office, to be a partner with Cort. The partnership seems to have been known to the Navy Board, and there is even reason to surmise that the advance of £27,000 to Cort was made by Jellicoe with its sanction. Cort removed to works which he had erected at Fontley, on the Titchin river, in the parish of Fareham, near Portsmouth and nearer Gosport. The supply of malleable iron for the construction of anchors and other naval purposes was one of his objects, and the advantage of proximity to a great naval arsenal was obvious. Henry Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville, was appointed Treasurer of the Navy in 1782, the year of Cort's first patent, and the American war came to a close in 1783, the date of his second patent. A reverberatory furnace, in which the pig or other iron was submitted to the well-known process of puddling, and rollers through which it was drawn into bars of any size, were the chief novelties of Cort's new process. Originalities they could neither of them strictly be called, nor did Cort announce them as such in his specifications; but he was the first to unite them in combination with other ingenious processes, and so as to produce excellent bar iron. In a few years the patented processes were in successful operation. In 1787 Richard Crawshay, ever vigilant and alert, had found his way from Cyfartha to Fontley, and arranged with Cort for the use of the patents, in consideration of the payment of a royalty of 10s. a ton on all iron to be manufactured in accordance with them at his Glamorganshire works. At the same time friend Jellicoe pulled the wires skilfully at the Navy Pay-office. On the 16th of April, 1789, a government advertisement, inviting tenders of iron for the use of the navy, contained the intimation, which reads so strangely in our day:—"No tenders for iron will be regarded but from persons who prove that they make it agreeable to Cort and Jellicoe's patent." After years of anxious labour, and the expenditure of all the savings of his navy agency, Cort seemed at last on the high road to fortune.

A few months more and he was a ruined man. On the 30th of August, 1789, Adam Jellicoe died at Islington, "after a fortnight's illness," and it was discovered that he was a public defaulter to the tune of more than £39,000. The £27,500 advanced to the Cort partnership had been taken from the government monies in his hands, and to that extent Cort and his partner were considered, doubtless properly, debtors of the Crown. Then, however, comes the mystery—one which will probably never be unravelled. The works at Fontley were worth a considerable sum, and two years' yield of the patent dues from the contracting ironmasters would alone have more than repaid the £27,500 advanced by Adam Jellicoe to the Cort partnership. But no mercy was shown, no delay was granted, to the unfortunate inventor. The breath was scarcely out of Adam Jellicoe's body, when, on the 1st of September, an affidavit was made by Alexander Trotter, the Paymaster of the Navy, afterwards famous for his connection with Lord Melville's alleged official misdoings, that it was a case of urgency, and that Cort was in distressed circumstances. An "extent" was issued against the property of the firm, the patent-rights included. Everything was seized by the Crown; Cort found himself thrown upon the world penniless and resourceless, while, strangest of all, Adam Jellicoe was placed in possession of the works at Fontley, and remained there undisturbed for long years afterwards. No attempt was made to realize then or subsequently the patent dues from the ironmasters. Those, therefore, who take the darkest view of poor Cort's sad story may almost be excused if they hint a belief that somehow the great ironmasters contrived to bribe persons in authority, so that they should not be asked to pay the royalties legally due for their use of patented processes which were already helping to bring them enormous wealth. The names both of Lord Melville and of Trotter have been mentioned in connection with these disreputable doings, but, in the absence of documentary evidence, it is impossible to pronounce a verdict, and all the records of their reciprocal transactions were destroyed by themselves about the time of Lord Melville's impeachment. The first reappearance of Cort after his ruin is in 1791, when, in answer to an appeal from him, the Commissioners of the Navy instruct one of their subordinates coldly and almost ironically to inform him that "your inventions appear to them of that utility as to induce them to give encouragement to the manufacture of British iron performed according to the methods that have been practised by you." Three years later, we find eminent London merchants and others, in a memorial to the government of the day, stating that they have entered into a subscription to provide for the temporary relief of Cort and his destitute family, a wife and twelve children—and praying that, as a permanent provision for him, he should receive "some situation in one of her Majesty's dockyards, the Customs, Excise, or any other office or place in which his talents and industry may prove useful to the public and himself." This appeal procured him a pension of nominally £200 a year, but, owing to reductions, the actual receipt was only £150.

Poor Cort did not long trespass on the munificent bounty of his country, dying wretched and obscure, in 1800, while the Crawshays and other great ironmasters of the country were accumulating colossal fortunes from their gratuitous use of his inventions. He was buried in Hampstead churchyard, where his grave, with an inscription made, in comparatively recent years, legible again by one of his sons, may still be seen. The truth, the whole truth, of "the case of Henry Cort," will probably never be discovered in this world, but enough of it is known to give him a very prominent place among the most useful and the worst requited martyrs of modern industrial discovery and invention.

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THE STATE OF TRADE.

UNDER the title of "Notes on 'Change" the *Sphinx* will, in future, contain every week an article on the state, prospects, and tendency of trade in Manchester. The writer has access to the very best sources of information, and the article, while popular in form and readable in style, will be a trustworthy and valuable review of the state of business, and of all the incidents and circumstances which affect or are likely to affect it.

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RAPHAEL.

AN original picture by Raphael, of high quality and in a rare state of preservation, is being exhibited at the Louvre in Paris, and will shortly be offered for sale. The competition for it will be keen, and the price obtained very large. It is called the "Virgin of the Monastery of St. Anthony of Padua," at Perugia, and was ordered from the artist himself by the Sisterhood of the above establishment. Begun in 1504, the painting was only finished some two years later; and it is the circumstance of these dates, and of what intervened between them, which both explains much that is otherwise difficult to understand in the picture, and also imparts to it no small portion of its value. In 1504 Raphael composed and began his picture. Shortly afterwards he paid his first visit to Florence, and there, for the first time, studied the works of Massacio in the Chapel del Carmine, those of Ghirlandajo, and, above all, of Fra Bartolomeo. No one can look for a moment at the lower portions of the Raphael now at the Louvre without recognising their great similarity to the latter master. The "Virgin of St. Anthony" was in fact finished after the artist's return, and under the influence of the new impressions he had received. Such considerations add greatly to the interest and value of the work, apart from its intrinsic merits and beauty. The transition from one style to the other can be traced as distinctly, in minute portions of the painting, as that from an earlier to a later period in the details of a Gothic cathedral. In this respect, and as a connecting link in the development of the great artist's powers, the painting seems to stand almost unrivalled. It is, besides, full of grace and dignity of expression, and of much which the eye delights to dwell upon for itself alone. It is painted on panel, and is in a most admirable state of preservation. It would be an inestimable treasure for our gallery, and worth almost any price that could be paid for it. But I fear it is bespoken absolutely for the Louvre; and that even a "Constitutional" Minister of Finance like M. Buffet will stop at nothing to make its location permanent where it is.—*London Guardian.*

An Englishman asked an Irishman the reason why his countrymen made so many bulls. "Faith" said Pat, "I think there is something in the air of ould Ireland, and I dare say if an Englishman were born there he would do the same.

GETTING ON WITH HIS READING.—A clergyman, in the county of Durham, tells the following anecdote. He had taught an old man in his parish to read, and had found him an apt pupil. After the lessons were finished, he had not been able to call at the cottage for some time, and when he did he only found the wife at home. "How's John?" said my friend. "He's canny, sir," said his wife. "How does he get on with his reading?"—"Nicely sir."—"Ah, I suppose he'll read his Bible very comfortably, now."—"Bible sir! bless you, he was out of the Bible and into the newspaper long ago."

"I am come for my umbrella," said the lender of it, on a rainy day to a friend. "Can't help that," said the borrower; "don't you see that I am going out with it?"—"Well, yes," replied the lender, astonished at such outrageous impudence; "yes, but—but—but what am I to do?"—"Do!" said the other, as he opened the umbrella, and walked off, "do as I did—borrow one."

FRENCH NOVELS.—The necessity of classifying French novels has at last been recognised. A lady entering a circulating library in Paris asks for a novel: "I don't know how to tell you exactly the kind I want," she says. "Oh, I think we shall be able to suit you," was the reply. "I mean something lively," explains the intending reader; "the sort of book that would not be precisely suitable for the library of a young girl."—"Maria," cries the keeper of the book-shop to her assistant, "novel for a woman of thirty-five."

HOW TO MAKE TEA.—Tea cannot be properly made from water that has been boiling long. Cold water should be put in the kettle, and added to the tea at the moment of ebullition, and not a second after. It might also be pointed out that the practice of measuring tea in spoons is a mistaken one, as the strength of the infusion depends on the weight, and a few larger or smaller leaves make a wonderful difference in the quantity contained in a teaspoon, and consequently in the strength of the infusion.—*Produce Markets Review.*

A QUAKER'S ADVICE.—An elderly gentleman, accustomed to "indulge," entered the room of a certain tavern, where sat a grave Friend by the fire. Lifting a pair of green spectacles upon his forehead, rubbing his inflamed eyes, and calling for hot brandy and water, he complained to the Friend that "his eyes were getting weaker, and that even spectacles didn't seem to do them any good."—"I'll tell thee, friend," said the Quaker, "what I think. If thee were to wear thy spectacles over thy mouth for a few months thy eyes would get well again."

A GAME COCK IN A SEA FIGHT.—On the memorable 1st of June (Lord Howe's victory) Captain Berkeley commanded the Marlborough, and broke through the French line between L'Impetueux and Le Mutius, each of superior force, and engaged them both. On going into action the captain ordered all the live stock to be thrown overboard, but, at the request of his crew, permitted them to retain an old game cock, with which they had fought several times, and always with success. In action the Marlborough was so severely handled by her opponents that half the crew were disabled, her captain was carried wounded below, her mainmast was shot away, and the remainder of the men were driven from their quarters. At this juncture, when the Marlborough was on the point of striking, the old game cock hopped up upon the shattered stump of the mainmast, and, with a loud and triumphant flapping of the wings, sent forth such a clear and lusty challenge as to be heard in every part of the disabled ship. One universal and gallant cheer from the broken crew arose; they remembered the indomitable courage of the bird that sat undismayed above the deck, and every soul on board who could drag his limbs to quarters re-manned the guns, resumed the action, and forced both their opponents to surrender. A silver medal, struck by order of Captain Berkeley, was hung upon the neck of the old game cock, and in the parks and around the princely halls of Goodwood he passed the remainder of his days in safety.

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SOUP AT DINING ROOMS.—There is one point on which we would offer a suggestion, which applies equally to all. Why should the diner who likes to commence with soup be condemned to a large soup-plate full? At private tables a small supply suffices to prepare for the solids to follow. In all public dining-rooms a quantity is served apparently calculated according to the amount of turtle coveted by a gobbler at a Lord Mayor's feast. The host who would undertake to supply a plate of soup of ordinary private life, at half the rate charged for the huge jorum usually propounded, would deserve a parsley crown, *ob cives bene servatos;* and, what is more, it would pay him better.—*Food Journal.*

MAKING A BUSINESS OF WIT.—At a supper party at which Dumas was present, the lady of the house called upon him, in the name of the other guests, to say something brilliant and witty. "Pray do so, Monsieur Dumas," she said, when he did not seem to listen to her; "say something witty—that is your business—you are doing so every day."—"Ah," replied Dumas, "if you look upon the matter in that light, I am ready to do so, provided all the other guests give us likewise a specimen of their business. Pray, sir," he continued, turning to an artillery officer sitting on his left, "commence, and fire off a cannon shot. It will be my turn next."

SHAKESPERE FOLIOS.—At an auction in London, recently, the first four folio editions of Shakespere were sold, after a spirited competition. The First Folio (1623), the first collected edition of the plays, was knocked down for £360, to Mr. S. Addington. The Second Folio (1632) was purchased, for £25. 10s, by Sir John Kershaw. The Third Folio (1660), a very rare copy, excited a fine competition, and was eventually knocked down to Mr. Addington for the sum of £200. The Fourth Folio (1685) was also purchased by the same gentleman for £20. 10s. Several reprints and facsimiles of the quarto plays were afterwards submitted for sale, and realised excellent prices.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

ERRATUM.—In last week's article "Manners and Customs on 'Change" page 111, for "with their hands in such close proximity to each other" read "with their heads &c.

TRUTH.—Officiousness run mad, no doubt, but scarcely worthy of notice in print.

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

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Its criticisms are for the most part just, and its humour piquant.—*London Examiner.*

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The Third Volume commenced on the 1st of January, 1870, and the following, among other articles, have appeared during January, February, and March:—

LIVING MEN OF LETTERS:—
7. Mr. George Grote.
8. ,, Geo. A. Sala.
9. ,, W. Hepworth Dixon.
10. Mrs. Beecher Stowe.
11. Mr. H. W. Longfellow.
12. ,, John Ruskin.
13. ,, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

LANCASHIRE WORTHIES:—
Samuel Crompton.
Barton Booth, (the Actor).
John Collier, (Tim Bobbin).
John Dalton.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES:—
Billiards: Cook v. Bowell.
,, Cook v. Green.
,, Match for the Championship.
,, Sketch of Cook.
,, Sketch of Roberts, sen.
,, Cook v. Boberts, sen., in Manchester.
Billiard Medley.
The French and English Wrestlers.
The Wrestlers: Lancashire v. France.
A Nemesis Boat Race.
A Paper Chase.

ART:—
Mr. Waterhouse and Owens College.
The Manchester Artists' Exhibition.
Are Artists the only Judges of Art.
The Pictures at the Town Hall.
Mr. C. H. Rickards's Collection.
Portraits at the Public Institutions.
The Picture Sales, Royal Institution.
The Controversy on the Prize Picture.

THE DRAMA:—
The Pantomimes-
Spectacle v. Pantomime.
The *Merchant of Venice* at the Prince's.
Mr. Barry Sullivan.
The *Gamester* and *Richard Third.*
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Formosa in Manchester.
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The Italian Opera.
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2. The Apparitor.
3. The Prison Humourist.
4. The Boy in the Streets.
5. The Undertaker.
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The Unexpected Visitor.
Lubbers Afloat.
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Lancashire Anecdotes.

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Deserted Churches: 4. All Souls', Ancoats.
,, ,, 5. St. George's, Rochdale Rd.
The Greek Archbishop in Manchester.
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On the Bowdon Line.
The Rhymster's Revenge.
Tied to Business.
Tell me, Lydia.
The Dance of Fancy.
Sonnet to Spring.
Shakespere and the Amateurs.
My Stage Career.
The Bold 'Bus Driver.'

TRADE AND COMMERCE:—
Cotton Tipsters.
Notes on 'Change.
Proposed New Exchange.
The Old Exchange and the New.
Hints for a Catechism of Commerce.
Manners and Customs on 'Change.

DESCRIPTIVE AND MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS:—
Owens College Extension.
Our Christmas Dinner in the Desert.
Sprigs from an Old Holly Bush.
What became of a Christmas Leg of Mutton.
How Moses Saved my Life.
The Germans in Manchester.
In Memoriam: James Prince Lee.
———— Thomas Fielden.
Bimini: By John Stores Smith.
What to Eat and How to Cook it.
On the Atlantic.
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A Ramble to Didsbury.
Tramways.
Our Daily Papers.
A Stranger at the Concert Hall.
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The Mordaunt Divorce Case.
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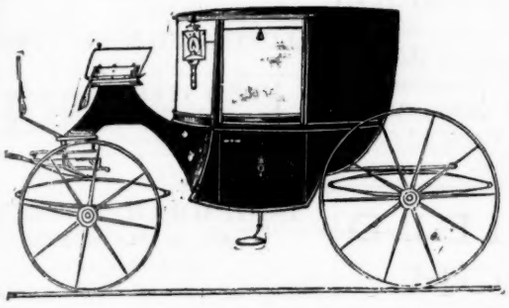

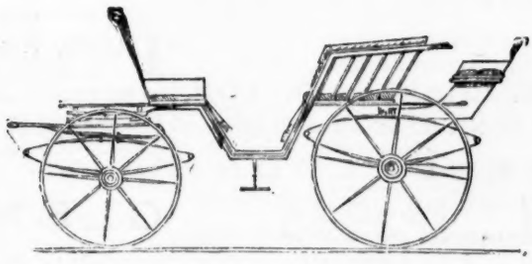

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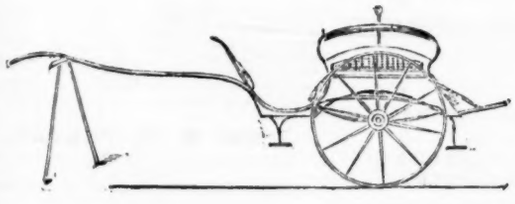

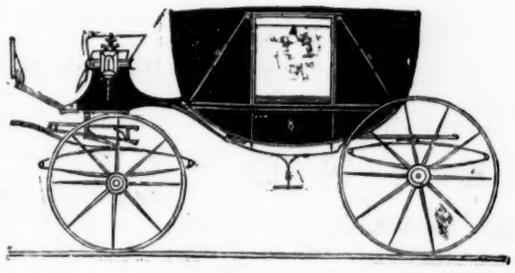

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